IN UNITY

FEBRUARY 1971

VOL. 2 NO. 1

The Voice of the Universal Fellowship of Metropolitan Community Churches.

A PRAYER

Grant me, O Lord, this day to see
The need this world may have for me;
To play the friend
Unto the end;
To bear my burden and to keep
My courage, though the way be steep.

Grant me, O Lord, to set aside
The petty things of selfish pride;
To toil without
Too much of doubt;
To meet what comes of good or ill
And be a gracious neighbor, still.

Grant me, O Lord, to face the rain
And not too bitterly complain;
Nor let a joy
My calm destroy;
But teach me so to live that I
Can brother with each passer-by.

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IN UNITY

The Voice of The Universal Fellowship of Metropolitan Community Churches.

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No anonymous letters will be considered for publication.

The publication of "In Unity Magazine" is the voice of our Fellowship. Publication of the magazine is part of each individual in all congregations that will bring "UNITY" to our Fellowship. The magazine is carrying religious articles, outstanding sermons given by your ministers, news of your community which would interest all congregations and news of your church activities.

There is a monthly theme for the magazine which we will follow with the majority of articles. The theme for March is "ECOLOGY", and the articles must be received by February 10th. The theme for April is, "EASTER AND RESURRECTION OF LIFE", which must be received by March 10th.

Reverand Perry knows that you will want to participate in the publication by taking an active part in submitting news from your congregation and help spread the word of God, to unite our brothers and sisters. We are growing fast, this is true, but there is still so many lost souls who need our help and understanding that we must use this medium to reach them. As each of you get involved with this publication you will find your reward to be very gratifying. By contributing of your time and talent, you can be assured you are greatly apprec-

iated by all who read your words. You will be helping people all over the world to overcome their problems and be able to live a better life. We all need you, so get involved immediately.

Send your articles to:
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Fellow Christians:
The Universal Fellowship of Metropolitan Community Churches is very pleased to present the 1st issue of Volume 2 of In Unity. We hope our renewed and concentrated efforts to be of service in the areas of religion and the homosexual, sexuality and the homosexual, and church commentary, will provide a constant source of information and education, as well as a source of good reading.
Our new editor Mr. Hughes has contacted all of our missions and churches to solicit writers from each area so that In Unity will become truly The Voice of the Universal Fellowship of Metropolitan Community Churches.
We invite you to subscribe now, for the convenience of regular delivery to your home. A subscription blank is printed below for your convenience. Please include your check or money order for$3.00 for the next twelve issues.
Yours In Christ,
Bo Siewert, Editor In Chief

COMING NEXT MONTH

Ecology and the Homosexual will be the theme of the March issue of In Unity. This subject should be a matter of great concern for all peoples, all over the world.

THE HOMOSEXUAL'S PRAYER

Thank you God, that I am a homosexual.

Thank you for a little more sensitivity, that I might have a greater appreciation of the arts; music, painting, sculpture, dance.

Thank you for a little more emotion that I might have a greater awarness of the world and the people around me - and feel a deeper love for my brothers & sisters.

I thank you God for being a member of a minority, because it makes my brothers and sisters a true family; bound together in a common cause.

I thank you for leading me to Metropolitan Community Church, that I might walk tall and proud with you.

And most of all, my deepest thanks, oh Lord, for choosing us to lead this great revival back to you, God. May our lives be a living example that all mankind may turn to the path of peace and love, through Jesus Christ to you God.Amen
by Deacon Tom Purcell

The MCC crosses, MCC hymnals (minimum orders of 10); membership cards, baptismal certificates and marriage certificates are avaliable through In Unity Publications.

A FOUNDATION IN GOD -
A Home in Los Angeles

A little over two years ago the spirit of God moved Reverand Troy D. Perry to start a church not for homosexuals only, but for all human beings who want to worship God, in Love and Unity. Through the beginning was small, the need was great and the word spread "God Loves Us, and there is a man who isn't afraid to stand up and call us together. The local congregation grew and the word spread to other towns and other states. The Universal Fellowship of Metropolitan Community Churches was formed. We grew in members and we began to pray to God for a sign that our movement was solid and here to stay. "God give us a home" we prayed and the word still spread, from San Francisco to Miami, and from Chicago to Hawaii. Reverand Perry fasted and we marched, because we weren't afraid anymore. All the time we prayed "God give us a sign, give us a home - a foundation".

Fellow members of the Universal Fellowship of Metropolitan Community Churches, God has given us a sign. He has given us a foundation. He has given us a home. Your church home address is: 2202 Union St. Los Angeles, Calif. 90005.

When we first looked at the building we were in doubt. It was old and filled with debries, but the purchase price was within our means. Professional contractors told us there would be around $26,000.00 needed for repairs and remodeling, but escrow went through so God meant this for our home.

Sunday, January 16, 1970 - 11:00 AM - A DAY TO PROVE THE WILL OF GOD

Since God had given us a sign, there was no doubt in Reverand Perry's mind that we could raise the money we needed. He stood before the congregation and told us of our needs, then with tears of faith, joy and humbleness, he prayed. Members of the congregation began to come forward with pledges and we raised $8,000. This week our congregation, parish by parish, member by member are out raising the rest of the money we need for God and the MCC Los Angeles home. If you feel moved to be a part of this beautiful happening, send your contribution to: Metropolitan Community Church (Building Fund) and where-ever you move, you will have a home and be a part of MCC . Our church foundation is firm as our belief in God.

We will write more in the next issue of our activities and our progress, our proposed "dedication ceremonies". Until then, stand tall and walk proud.

Letters to the Editor

Dear Editor:

I am writing relative to an article in the October 1970 issue of In Unity about Chicago (page 7). I enjoyed reading how God is prospering our missions in the various cities and communities, but I was quite upset by part of the article which stated that, "of his two day visit, Rev. Hose had only one complaint-- 'They used white wine for Communion' and it is not hard to feel Rev. Hose's problem in identifying the wine with the Blood of Christ."

Is such a trivial pettiness really to be that complainable when, as in the article by Howard Wells on page 9 of the same issue, there are so many problems that are actually important, e.g. young people selling themselves (not only on Selma Avenue): there is not enough constructive and knowlegeable guidance of young people who are caught in an insecure homosexual world without guidance, etc. I feel the list is endless and can be read in Howard's article.

As a deacon in the San Francisco Church and co-developer of the Oakland Mission I feel that I have the background of experience and training to know the total unnecessity of pettiness in liturgical understanding. The most importance is - and should be - placed on the wonderful fact that Jesus Christ is the Savior of EVERYONE. What possible difference could it make whether the liquid were water, coke, milk, beer, coffee, or wine. Our Lord told us to celebrate in remembrance of Him. It was never stated that He used red wine. We use only grape juice so that our people with alcoholic problems may also partake.

Pray God we shall not become as petty as the churches we have left.

Yours in Christ's Service,
Bob Grace

CONCERNED

Many leaders in the homophile community, although not directly associated with Universal Fellowship of Metropolitan Community Church, are concerned and care about what's happening within our denomination.
This column, then, will reflect their involvement in the rapid growth of MCC all over the world. Our thanks and prayers for their continued successes to all such beautiful people.

December 22, 1970

Dear Rev. Perry;

Some years ago a writer and photographer from one of the popular slick magazines came to my house to do an article. A group of us were publishing the magazine 'One'. Most of us had regular full time jobs. When I joined the group they had been in business for about two years. We decided to call it, 'One -- The Homosexual Magazine' right on the cover. No one had done anything like that before.

This, in the eyes of the outside press, was news. That's why they came to do an article on us. You can be sure we were delighted to tell them all about it. But, when they wanted to take pictures we all said no, because we'd loose our jobs. (If you can imagine a group of queens not wanting to pose for pictures.) We were scared to death. So we compromised. We got our pictures taken, but with our backs to the camera, so no one would know who we were.

Well, that was a long time ago, and times have changed. Since then, many dedicated people have publicly identified with the magazine and with the homophile community, and we have all benifited from that. But I shall never forget that incident. I think a small part of me died that day. There was an opportunity, but I just didn't have the courage to face the camera.

I write this to you because you know what it means to 'face the camera' and the public. Because of what you are doing, as a man and as pastor of MCC, we can all walk taller. I'm just one of many who sees you and appreciates.

The price you personally pay cannot be measured in dollars. But the price of the new church building certainly can. So here's my check for a hundred dollars, I wish it could be more.

God Bless you and keep you.

Yours truly,
Ben Taylor

A CONTEMPORARY VIEW

Once tabooed, homosexuality will now come under academic scrutiny in "Homosexuality: A Contemporary View," one of the key sociology and anthropology courses to be given this spring by New York University's School of continuing Education. Also included in the curriculum are "The Counterculture; Youth and Revolution,""Oppressed Minorities: SOCIETY'S Scapegoats" and "The Way It can Be: New Approaches to Teaching and Learning."

"Homosexuality: A Contemporary View" is designed to explore objectively the relation of the homosexual to the law, religion and the arts. Guest lecturers from these fields provide students with facts about and better understanding of homosexuals and their lives in our society. The course, coordinated by Rosalyn Regelson, will be given in 10 sessions on Monday evenings, 8:10 to 10:00 PM, Feb. 1 - April 19.

Norman Mailer, Paul Krassner and Andy Warhol will be among the guest lecturers in a 10-session course, "The Counterculture: Youth and Revolution," which will explore the history, content and politics of the youth counterculture, and question whether it is genuinely revolutionary or just a product processed by the power structure to absorb rebellion. The significance of the rejection by the under-30 generation of the values of the "establishment" is studied through an observation of pot-politics, street politics, the new sexuality, communes and other characteristics of the counterculture. The course, also coordinated by Rosalyn Regelson, will be given on Thursday evenings, 8:10 - 10:00 PM, Feb. 11 - April 22.

Western society has been heavily influenced by Christian, rural and masculine values, and other values have represented severe threats to society. "Oppressed Minorities: Society's Scapegoats," a 10-session course taught by Howard M. Solomon, will view oppressed groups for a better understanding of the values and countervalues of contemporary society. Among the topics to be discussed are women, intellectuals, witches and sorcerers, the insane, the poor and the blacks. The course will be given on Thursday evenings, 8:10- 10:00 PM, Feb. 11 April 22.

"The Way It Can Be: New Approaches To Teaching and Learning," a 12-session course to be taught on Wednesday evenings, 8:10 - 10:00 PM, Feb 10 - May 5, covers some of the most promising experimental work being done in American education today. Radical new techniques for solving the

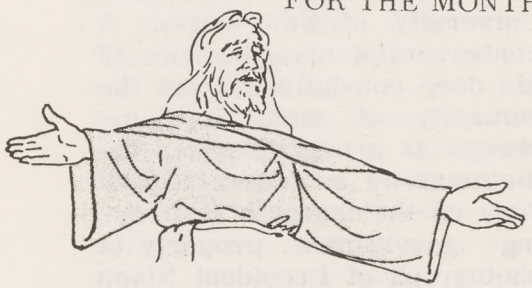
"crisis in the classroom" will be discussed. Guest lecturers include John Holt, George Leonard and other authors who have written in this field. The course is coordinated by Beatrice and Rondal Gross in cooperation with the Academy for Educational Development, Inc.

For further information on these courses and the more than 150 others to be given this spring by the New York University School of Continuing Education, write for the School Bulletin, NYU School of Continuing Education, Room 21, 2 University Place, New York, N.Y. 10003 (212) 598-2373.

Your church and your community extends across the nation; a mighty fortress we, for we walk with God.

Thought

FOR THE MONTH



It is easier to perceive error than to find truth, for the former lies on the surface and is easily seen, while the latter lies in the depth where few are willing to search for it. —Goethe.

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A PUBLICATION OF METROPOLITAN COMMUNITY CHURCH, INC.

LAUD HUMPHREYS

Reverend Laud Humphreys served ten years as an Episcopal minister. Presently, he is Associate Professor of Criminal Justice at the State University of New York. A controversial man, because of his deep convictions about the humanity of man, Dr. Humphreys is presently under indictment by a Federal Grand Jury on the charge of destroying government property (a photograph of President Nixon at a draft board demonstration).

When not teaching or lecturing, Dr. Humphreys serves on the Editorial Board of the Archives of Sexual Behavior and writes extensively. In Unity readers should be aware of his analysis of impersonal sex in public places, Tearoom Trade.

New books "in the works" by this author are: Homosexuality, a volume in the Atherton "Controversy" series; and Gay Libs and Liberals; The Homophile Movements in America.

In Unity urges you, the reader, to give us your views on this article. Write to us: P. O. Box 38098, Los Angeles, California 90038

This article represents the viewpoint of the writer and is not necessarily the opinion of the Universal Fellowship of Metropolitan Community Churches. It is our desire to present to our readers a wide spectrum of trends now being expressed by many writers in the press on Religion andthe Homosexual.

The recent announcement that Hugh Montefiore has been made a Bishop in the Church of England reminded me of the stir a few years back when that noted Anglican theologian suggested in a sermon that Jesus may well have been a homosexual. I once had a parishioner leave a congregation because I noted that Jesus was a Jew - and the widow of the founder of a major oil company cancelled her pledge because I mentioned "sexual intercourse" in the pulpit - so I can well imagine the reaction churchmen to the hints of that prominent cleric that Jesus just might have been gay!

The Church has always suffered from a number of hangups over the human nature of the God-Man it worships. Every heresy in Christian history has been the result of the more powerful, victorious (and thus "orthodox") party's insistence that the losers were placing too much emphasis on either the humanity or the divinity of Christ. On the whole, those who stress the divine nature of Jesus have won the historical struggle. Thus the liturgical year of the more orthodox churches devotes only about three months to celebrating the Lord's earthly life. Likewise, popular liturgical art tends to surround him with a halo and clad him in glistening garments. or ecclesiastical

robes.

Jesus as a completely human being has generally proved too embarrassing for Christians to contemplate. Every "reform" movement form Seventeenth Century puritanism to modern Catholicism has tried to rip his naked, human body off the cross. "Proper" congregations avoid discomfort by using a finely polished, brass cross (preferably engraved with Easter lilies) as the focal point for worship. Even where the crucifix is used, they clad the corpus in a loin cloth. This latter practice may be a merciful one for, were the Church's official teaching to be believed, his penis would surely have atrophied for lack of use by the age of 33.

Of course, during the Christmas season each year, it is quite acceptable to portray the infant Jesus, penis and all, safely sheltered in his mother's arms. Babies, after all, are thought by all but the most thoroughly jaded Freudians to be sexually innocent creatures. In the years of my parochial ministry, I used to shock people by suggesting that the doctrine of the incarnation necessitated our recognizing that "the God we worship wet his pants, defecated, and had to have his diapers changed." Had I proceeded with the logical extension of this central, Christian doctrine to proclaim that Jesus masturbated as a teenager, my active ministry would never have lasted ten years.

The trouble for Christians is that this doctrine of "the whole and perfect human nature" of Jesus, that he was made "very man," is essential to their teaching. Other religions have gods and holy men - but they don't have a God who was (is) also completely human. That, supposedly, is the point of Christmas, the birth of God in human flesh. The Christian's God, and his human example, are one person.

Such beliefs are easy to mouth - as in the creeds - and even easier to sing in the form of Christmas carols; but their implications are so unpalatable to the pious as to cause all but the most earthy Christians to dilute their religion into unrecognizable pablum. In a delightful book, now out of print, Geddes MacGregor predicted that, by the Twenty-First Century, Christians would have turned to "Narcissictic Shintoism," leaving the practice of incarnational Christianity to a few outcasts lef residing in the "underworld." At the time MacGregor wrote Letters from a Christian Ghetto, the President still risked running into some realistic religion by attending church services. Nixon guards against such dangers by allowing only those like Norman Vincent Peale and Billy Graham, who will be certain to preach only what he wishes to hear, to grace the White House

Chapel. Can you imagine Spiro Agnew, standing in the midst of his Episcopal parish, professing belief that Jesus, besides being born of the Virgin Mary, "engaged in sexual expression, was crucified as a criminal, etc...."?

From St Paul on, the standard Christian cop-out on Christ's sexuality has been to insist that Jesus was "the perfect man" and that perfect men, although tempted, don't entertain lustful thoughts, much less do anything about them. Paul, you remember, was troubled about a certain "thorn in the flesh" and used to beg Jesus to take it away. The Lord's answer was: "My strength is made perfect in weakness." Without entering into an exegetical hassle over that particular series of encounters, permit me to express the opinion that Paul was the closet queen most influential in corrupting what had the beginnings of a perfectly good religion. Paul is the one who urged Christians to put on "the breastplate of righteousness," and I point out in Tearoom Trade that closet queens have been doing just that ever since. Since Paul's time, the ideal of Christian perfection has been denied to anyone who failed to keep it in his pants.

It is beyond my present intention to provide a lengthy account of the bloody history of the Church's treatment of homosexuals. Somewhere in the early Medieval mind, homosexuality, heresy, and witchcraft became linked up (just as today's Middle American mind equates a hip life-style with Communism and free love), so anyone labeled with one of these characteristics was punished for all three. The Albigensians, who taught that gay relationships provided a good way of avoiding reproduction while awaiting the Second Coming (no pun intended), were exterminated. They were supposedly Bulgarians in ethnicity, which is where the British got the word "buggery." Since the writings of such heretics were burned along with their bodies, it is difficult for us to know whether they ever harbored the impression that Jesus was gay.

THE GOSPEL EVIDENCE

Unless severely brainwashed by the Church, a student of the Gospels might conclude that Jesus, if not actively gay, at least gave evidence of homosexia; fee;omgs/ The Fourth Gospel, supposedly written by John, states repeatedly and quite pointedly that John was the disciple "whom Jesus loved" and who sat with his head resting on Jesus' chest at the Last Supper. This same Gospel reports that, while dying on the cross, Jesus committed his widowed mother to John for safe keeping. It weems logical that one might well transmit this sort of responsibility to his lover. With no hint of jealousy, but in explicit

terms John also reports that Jesus loved Mary and Martha of Bethany, along with their brother, Lazarus. Indeed, his tearful display at the tomb of Lazarus caused the Jews to remark: "Behold how he loved him!"

In the Gospel according to Mark, it is noted that Jesus, beholding the rich young man, "loved him." Jesus also asked this young man to give up all his wealth and follow him, but that one loved his possessions more than he did Jesus.

The obvious retort to one who places any emphasis on these particular loves of Jesus is, "So what! Christ was an exceptionally loving person. He loved everyone." Yes, but that is precisely the point: the Evangelists agree that he manifested great love toward all sorts of persons; nevertheless, only in regard to those five mentioned above was it made explicit by the authors of the Gospels that Jesus "loved" them.

Now it is possible to claim that Christ's love for these three men and two women was completely chaste. When exposed to them, he may have evoked five quick Hail Marys, run twice around the block, and taken a cold shower. His biographers certainly gave no indication that he reached orgasm with any of the five; and we may be certain that had John gone into any greater detail about the thing between him and the Master, the Church's later editors would have censored it. Regarding strictly internal evidence in the New Testament, then, the sexual life of Jesus (along with a number of other aspects of his biography) is left in doubt. It doesn't require a dirty mind, however, for one who approaches the Gospels like any other biographical account to surmise that he may have engaged in some erotic activity with persons of both sexes.

It is precisely because the Church claims to be the official source of scriptural interpretation, that the evidence seems weighted in favor of at least some ambi-sexual activity in the Lord:s life. The Church insists that he was completely human - with a fully human personality. Albert Ellis and a number of other authorities on personality express doubt that full development of personality can be achieved without some sexual expression. In recent criticism of the Report of the President's Commission on Pornography, Dr. Spock insists that some repression and sublimation of sexual instincts is essential to the development of civilization. Few of those who agree with him, however, would recommend total sexual abstinence for those who would enjoy mental health.

In the light of modern social science, it may be concluded that Jesus must have enjoyed some interpersonal, sexual re-

lationships, complete with orgasm, if he can be said to have shared fully in human nature. If, as the Church claims he is the prime example of the healthy, whole, human personality, he cannot have fought off erections all his life. The Gospels, I think, provide fair indication with whom (if not specifically how) he engaged in sexual activity.

THE TEACHER AND HIS BOYS

For external evidence about the sexual life of Jesus we must look to the historical context of his ministry. The political rule of his time was Roman the religious context was Jewish but the cultural ethos was a Greek one. A handful of Jewish youth (St. Paul was one) were admitted to education under the great scholars in the Temple of Jerusalem. For most youngsters, however, the only means of education was provided by itinerant teachers who wandered from village to village, picked out the boys who showed greatest promise, and called them to follow, submitting to their educational discipline (thus the word, disciples). Such roving bands of a master and his dozen disciples, living off alms begged from town to town, were common during the centuries of Greek cultural dominance. Always on the move, they were educated in direct experiences of comparative geography, history, customs, philosophy, architecture, political science, and the finer points of the art of loving. We get some idea of the curriculum from reading of one such school that Socrates ran.

These schools had certain features in common: the teacher was usually a rather articulate and charismatic individual (how else could he have recruited pupils, there being no such devices of legitimation as Ph. D.'s or teaching certificates?); the group always had a scribe to take lecture notes (Matthew probably served that function for Christ's disciples) to which others had access for review and later exercises in writing; there was an almskeeper (Judas) who kept the group fed and clothed; the pupils were almost always in their early teens, because most older men were tied to the responsibilities of raising a family (Peter was probably the oldest of Jesus' boys); it was not uncommon for a few women to follow the group, attending to some of their "physical needs." Finally, because homosexual love was thought to be a higher form of love than the "merely physical" relationships between men and women (they had yet to learn of Women's Lib), the teacher generally illustrated this philosophical point by selecting a lover from among his disciples. That may well have been John's function.

As Harvey Cox points out in a recent issue of Playboy, Jesus was a pretty radical sort

of teacher, concentrating on issues of social justice, combined with a liberal education in theology and the healing arts. The closest analogy to his school in our time would be a teenage group of radically-oriented hippies, participating in an itinerant sort of Free School. Like Socrates before him, Jesus was executed for teaching sedition and heresy. along with corrupting the nation's youth. There are always plenty of Martha Mitchells around to point accusing fingers at "those professors who are the source of all our problems."

My advice to the reader who wants a better understanding of Jesus, including his sexual life, would be to reread the Gospels with the above pedagogical context in mind. Then discard everything else (except the Acts of the Apostles) from the New Testament. What the modern gay person, or the ambi-sexual swinger, should find is the story of a man and his disciples with whom it is very easy to identify. You may also conclude that The Rev. Troy Perry and his congregations are about the only Christians left who are free enough to identify with the Lord as did his early followers.

---Laud Humphreys

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Jesus: "I am leaving you with a gift — peace of mind and heart. And the peace I give isn't fragile . . . so don't be troubled or afraid." John 14:27.

"The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light: they that dwell in the land of the shadow of death, upon them hath the light shined.

For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder; and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, the mighty God, the everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace." (Isiah 9:2,6)

So spoke the prophesy of Isaiah almost 740 years before the writing of St. Luke when he recorded, "And she (Mary) brought forth her first born son, and wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger; because there was no room for them in the inn ... and there were in the same country shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. And lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the angel said unto them, Fear not: for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour which is Christ the Lord." (Luke 2:7,11)

In most countries December 25 has been set aside as the day when we are to remind ourselves of the coming of Christ. I believe homosexuals are constantly reminded by the "church" of the birth and death of Christ. While it should to a thing to rejoice about, in our community it can become a paint of anguish. Anguish, because so many homosexuals believe the lies that have been perpetrated against his sexuality by so-called "followers" of this Jesus.

If we listen to the prophecy of doom, we would be led to believe that this Christ hates "gay" men, women, boys or girls more than anything else. But it is just not so!

Remember this, there is a difference between what the "Church" says and what the Bible actually says and means.

The Church in America after the Revolutionary War treated the black man as an inferior because, according to the majority of the "Church" people, the Bible plainly stated that fact - or so they reasoned. (One church in America is still that way - the Mormon Church, or the Church of the Lord Jesus Christ of the Late

Christ of the Latter Day Saints). Most church groups now welcome blacks to their churches and encourage them to join. Very few Americans now believe that blacks are inferior.

RARE STEAK - A SIN

When it comes to talking about homosexuality, many churchmen gleefully quote Leviticus 20:13 as a condemnation of gay life. Of course, these same individuals have forgotten that the Old Testament discusses in the same breath such

sins as eating rabbit (Leviticus 11:6), lobster, clams, shrimp, oysters (Leviticus 11:10-12), or rare steak (Leviticus 17:10) or of wearing garments "of divers sort, as of woolen and linen together" (Deuteronomy 22:11, KJV). It would be ridiculous to excommunicate a male member of one congregation for wearing a cotton shirt woolen pants. Yet, because the eating of certain foods were considered sinful by Moses, I'm afraid very few churches today would dismiss a member for breaking these "rules". . . How some churchmen like to pick and choose what they "believe."

SODOM & HAIRDOS

The Old Testament story of Sodom has been quoted as an example of how God feels about the homosexual. We have been told "God destroyed Sodom because of its homosexuality." We are happy to say that this is not true. In Genesis 18:32 we find the reason God destroyed the city. It was because God couldn't find ten righteous men, period. Read God's conversation with Abraham in the entire 18th chapter of Genesis!

We must also keep in mind that even the original Scriptures were recorded by men - men influenced by Mosaic law and the accepted social views of the day.

In considering the effect of social pressures on the Church's teaching in modern days, let us look at some of the things forbidden in the New Testament (KJV quoted) but practiced widely in or sanctioned by our Churches at the present time.

In I Corinthians 7:10-11 and 39, St. Paul spells out what he terms as God's law against divorce and remarriage. Here we notice he places priority on this law over many teachings which he clarifies as being his own judgment - and rightly so. Read Christ's own words in Mark 10:11-12. Yet how many ministers today unite divorced persons with new partners in the sacrament of marriage - or accept such couples joyfully into their congregations without so much as a furrowed brow!

What minister would quote I Corinthians 6:1-7 to a parishioner involved in court proceedings against one who had injured him? Or I Timothy 2:9-10 to a woman who wears gold or pearls or a stylish hairdo?

How many ushers would turn the hatless woman from the church door with I Corinthians 11:5-6 and 13? Or the boy with long hair with I Corinthians 11:14? In fact, why do we never question the fact that Christ is always pictured with long hair while St. Paul says "If a man have long hair, it is a shame unto him"?

How many female Sunday School teachers and missionaries, women preachers and

evangelists would the Church lose if it followed I Corinthians 14:34-35! Even the nuns would find convent life vastly different!

What would happen to our educational system (or the Church) if the Church began a crusade against women teachers based on I Timothy 2:11-12?

St. Paul was the only writer in the New Testament that made direct references to homosexuality. (Romans 1:26-28)
He was against homosexuals. He was also against women's rights, men with long hair and the freeing of slaves. He wrote one entire book in the New Testament concerning the conversion of a slave to Christianity . . . but he didn't concern himself with helping the free man (the book of Colossians) (Timothy 1:9-10, Corinthians 6:9)

In observing these discrepancies, I am not attempting to berate the Bible, but rather to point out that it was originally written by man, its doctrines supplemented by man into the broad base of Christian theology. And man is fallible. Even St. Paul, recognizing this, often states that he is giving his own views rather than commandments of God.

We need the Bible as a source to understanding Christ but we need to spend more time observing His spirit as related there rather than the "letter of the law" given by His followers in attempting to spread His message.

Pick up an edition of the Bible with Christ's recorded statements printed in red. Study only His words, comparing His positive approach with the often negative approach found elsewhere throughout the Scriptures. Notice His emphasis on love - His silence on the means of sex but concern only with the motives behind it.

CELIBACY OR DAMNATION

Can we actually believe a Christ of such love, a Christ who recognizes the human need for mortal love and its physical fulfillment as well as for His divine love, can ask that legions of homosexuals either live a life of celibacy or else face eternal damnation? Not the Christ I know!

"I know, and am persuaded by the Lord Jesus, that there is nothing unclean of itself; but to him that esteemeth any thing to be unclean, to him it is unclean" (Romans 14:14, KJV). "Unto the pure all things are pure: but unto them that are defiled and unbelieving is nothing pure" (Titus 1:15,KJV).

Only when we as individuals accept the fact that we are homosexual can we begin to adjust our lives to His love, walking tall, unashamed and unafraid into His Church as Christian homosexuals.

Surely, as Christians, we homosexuals can call Him "Wonderful, Counsellor, Mighty God, Prince of Peace."

Jesus never said, "Only you heterosexuals, who sex in the 'missionary position' with a number of the opposite sex, can become followers of mine." No! Never! He did say, "I am the bread of life: he that cometh to me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst."

He is our Saviour!

NEWS OF OUR CHURCHES

MCC Advance - Miami

The news from Miami is that they are having all sorts of good things happen and activities which will include a visit by Reverand Perry. There is first of all, services at 3356 Virginia, Coconut Grove, Florida, 11:00 AM; then, there is Group Therapy on Wednesday evenings 8:00 PM and choir practice at 7:45 PM. They are having buffets, pot-lucks and banquets. All of these events are so beautifully successful, that we know Miami is really active.

In the MCC Advance, last November 3, 1970, there was a new twist given by Pastor Brad Wilson. There was a word of warning and enlightenment to all attending church. The words "POLICE ENTRAPMENT" stood out to warn all concerned. The closing paragraph he noted "MCC is the only homophile group that is active in Miami at this time. We must lead the fight. We need your help!" Right now write a check to MCC Legal Defense Fund. Let's get behind our brother and do all we can to help him win his case and in his winning help ourselves. This is so true of everyday life. When we help our brother, we are really helping ourself.

Miami - We are truly proud of you for all the work you are doing in making our world a better place to live, and teaching us to share with our brothers & sisters.

An excerpt from the Advance

THE PASTOR SPEAKS

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

I never cease to be amazed at the gossip that goes "a-flyin' " in our community. Some people, it would seem, spend many sleepless nights making up stories to top those which they have heard through "grape-vine." These individuals do not realize the damage that they could possibly do, not only to themselves; but to their fellowmen. Before you pass any detrimental chatter, that "juicy tid-bit," stop and ask yourself, "Who will I hurt?" In the end, my good people, you will actually be hurting yourselves.

Yours-In-Him
Rev. Brad Wison

SAN FRANCISCO

What do you call a man who loves another man? A Christian! What do you call the city by the bay! San Francisco.

With these two thoughts in mind, I bring you the news from the north, the city by the bay, where the golden gate croses the blue waters of the pacific, where Metropolitan Community Church of San Francisco presides.

MCC of San Francisco has the honor of being the largest and oldest of the MCC mission churches. Started by its pastor, Howard Wells, the church has grown from a group of 10 persons congregating in a home for a prayermeeting on January 22, to a congregation of about 200 each Sunday. The story of MCC San Francisco, is a story similar to that of the mother church; a man with a dream. But in this case, a dream already in existance down south. Howard had been a member of Los Angeles church during the spring and summer of 1969, when a job transfer brought him to San Francisco, when finally he organized a prayer meeting at his home. Four people were notified of the meeting, and ten people showed up. Eventually arrangements were made with a restaurant, Jackson's but under the stipulation that he pay for a minimum of 25 meals, regardless of how many people show up.

The service began on February 22, with only four persons present, and within five minutes after the opening prayer by Howard, 16 persons walked in. And so, MCC San Francisco had announced to the world, that this was the beginning: In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth, Gen.1:01, and in the beginning Howard created MCC San Francisco.

On Sunday September 13, San Francisco witnessed a moving experience when 825 persons showed up for Spiritual Renewal Day '70', filing into California Hall. A day to be remembered by many, full of brotherly love and Christian fellowship. The altar was banked with many beautiful floral arrangements donated by San Francisco florists. The San Francisco choir opened the services with a beautiful rendition of "The Lord is in His Holy Temple", as the Reverends Howard Wells and Troy Perry marched to the stage. Rev. Perry was greeted by loud applause, as he announced: "I'm awfully happy to be visiting the Queen City of the west"! At closing, everyone joined hands and sang "We Shall Overcome".

MCC San Francisco moved fast, and in many different ways; such as riding cable cars around the streets of San Francisco singing Christian songs, and inviting persons to attend church services, and standing

outside bar doors at 2:00 AM in the morning inviting persons to attend church services.

Aradio program entitled "The Gay Cross", which is broadcast weekly, and can be heard on KQED-FM, every Tuesday evening at 8:00PM. They also have their very own youth group called the "Chicken Coop.

You see, San Francisco is a city on the move, they're not going to sit back and let Los Angeles have all the glory, no sir, San Francisco is forging ahead. their congregation is growing, their sound is being heard, and Los Angeles is so proud of them. Oh yes, one more thing I must put in print, as the golden sun sets behind the waters of the Pacific, the sea gulls hover over the hills of the city, as the fog drifts in, and the sounds of fog horns can be heard, MCC San Francisco is alive, and well. and may Gods blessings be plenty upon them.

An excerpt from "MCC Speaking UP":
If you have a friend worth loving, Love him, Yes, and let him know that you love him, ere life's evening tinge his brow with sunset glow. Why should good words ne'er be said of a friend--till he is dead

If you hear a song that thrills you sung by any child of song, praise it. Do not let the singer wait deserved praises long. Why should one sho thrills your heart lack the joy you may impart?

If you hear a prayer that moves you by its humble, pleading one, join it. Do not let the seeker bow before his God alone. Why should not your brother share the strength of two or three in prayer?

If you see the hot tears falling from a brothers weeping eyes. share them, and by kindly sharing own your kinship in the skies. When a brothers heart is sad?

If a silvery laugh goes rippling through the sunshine on his face. share it. Tis the wise mans saying--For both grief and joy a place. There's health and goodness in the mirth in which an honest laugh has birth.

If your work is made more easy by a friendly, helping hand, say so. Speak out brave and truly ere the darkness veil the land. Should a brother workman dear falter for a word of cheer!

Scatter thus your seeds of kindness all enriching as you go-leave them. Trust the Harvest giver: He will make each seed to grow so, until the happy end, your life shall never lack a friend.

Rev. Alyce Nelms

NEWS From Chicago:

Services are held each Sunday at 7:00PM in the Broadway Methodist Church, located at 3342 North Broadway. A social hour is held in the church basement after each Sunday service. Coffee, tea and cake are served for their approximate 100 attendants. Each Thursday evening at 7:30 PM there is an alternating Bible study and discussion group held in one of the classrooms of the church. There are many social events to attend, so watch for the MCC Newsletter from Good Shepherd Parish. Through the "grape-vine" we heard that there was a Gala event on January 16th which specialized in a chili supper. There was homemade chili, crackers, milk, banana pudding and pie, with coffee for dessert. The event was a marvelous success.

The reports from the theatre party for "Molly Brown" show that there was approximately 40 people in attendance. Mr. Barber is to be commended for making the event possible and such a great success. Let's hear more of these wonderful socials.

An excerpt from "Good Shepherd Parish" Newsletter:
"Prayer is a relationship which God initiates between Himself and men. It is God's action in prayer which is definitive; God enables men to pray. Prayer is not something which begins with men and ends with God, but throughout prayer men are respondents and, more than that, the possibility of the human response to God through prayer is installed by God's initiative."

Wm. Stringfellow

Greetings from Metropolitan Community Church, Phoenix, Arizona.

As most of you know, Phoenix is a winter resort area with the winter sun very warm and the winter nights not always too cold. MCC-Phoenix is an oasis in the desert for all Christian travelers. The neucleus of MCC-Phoenix, well populated with our dear sisters, stands steadfast to the principals of the Universal Fellowship. Nearing their 8th month of existance, they have leased a building at 401 East Roosevelt, and after a lot of fixing up, it is now "Gods home" in Phoenix. Tuesday nights are counseling night for all members of the desert community. Wednesday night is "Abundant Life" class, and Friday night is Fellowship night in their new hall adjoining the sanctuary.

We are looking forward to more news from Phoenix in the next issue.

METROPOLITAN COMMUNITY CHURCH SPLICING LIVES
TOGETHER THROUGHOUT THE NATION AND THE WORLD

Music to Our Ears?

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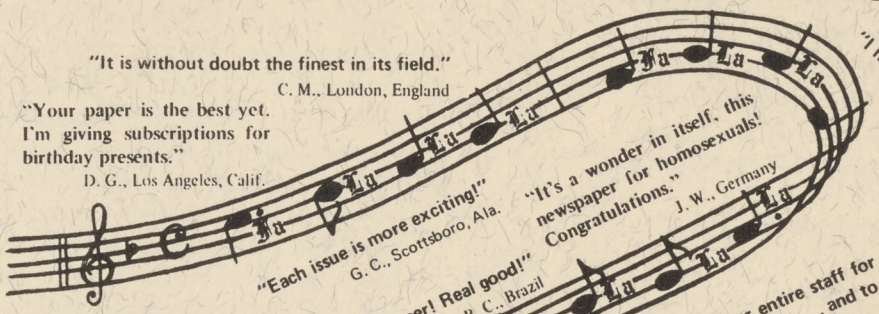
D. G., Los Angeles, Calif.



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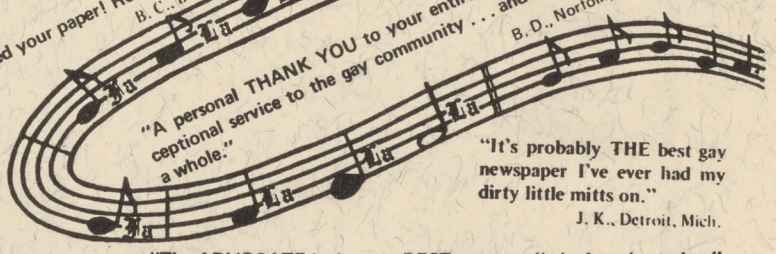

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